

Appl. No. 10/731461
Reply to Action dated April 5, 2007
Page 2

IN THE CLAIMS

Amendments To The Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A solid-state imaging device, comprising:
a plurality of pixel cells arranged on a semiconductor substrate; and
a driving unit that is provided for driving the plurality of pixel cells,
wherein each of the plurality of pixel cells comprises:
a photodiode that converts incident light into a signal charge and stores the signal charge;
a transfer transistor that is provided for reading out the signal charge stored in the photodiode; and
a potential smoothing unit that is formed so as to allow a potential from the photodiode to the transfer transistor to change smoothly[[.]],
wherein the potential smoothing unit comprises at least three diffusion layers formed in the semiconductor substrate, each of the diffusion layers having a different depth from a surface of the semiconductor substrate.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently amended) The solid-state imaging device according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein the at least [[two]] three diffusion layers are formed below the gate electrode provided in the transfer transistor.
4. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 1,
wherein the potential smoothing unit comprises a first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer and a second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer,

Appl. No. 10/731461
Reply to Action dated April 5, 2007
Page 3

wherein the first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer is formed for dissipating a first pocket in which the potential from the photodiode to the transfer transistor plunges and the second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer is formed for dissipating a second pocket in which the potential plunges on a side of the transfer transistor with reference to the first pocket.

5. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 4, wherein the first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer is formed at a position deeper than the second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer.
6. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 4, wherein the potential smoothing unit further comprises a barrier dissipation-diffusion layer that is formed for dissipating a barrier of the potential occurring between the first pocket and the second pocket.
7. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 6,
wherein the first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer is formed at a position deeper than the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer, and
the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer is formed at a position deeper than the second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer.
8. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 6, wherein the first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer, the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer and the second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer are composed of p-type impurity diffusion layers.
9. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 6,
wherein the first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer and the second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer are composed of p-type impurity diffusion layers, and
the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer is composed of a n-type impurity diffusion layer.
10. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 6,

Appl. No. 10/731461
Reply to Action dated April 5, 2007
Page 4

wherein an end of the first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer on a side of the photodiode is closer to the photodiode than to an end of the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer on a side of the photodiode, and

the end of the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer on the side of the photodiode is closer to the photodiode than to an end of the second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer on a side of the photodiode.

11. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 4, wherein the first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer is formed at a position of about 0.7 μm in depth from a surface of the semiconductor substrate.

12. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 4, wherein the second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer is formed at a position shallower than a depth of about 0.2 μm from a surface of the semiconductor substrate.

13. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 6, wherein the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer is formed at a position of about 0.4 μm in depth from a surface of the semiconductor substrate.

14. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 1,
wherein the photodiode comprises:

a shallow p-type photodiode diffusion layer formed in the semiconductor substrate; and

a deep photodiode diffusion layer that is formed below the shallow p-type photodiode diffusion layer so as to be exposed from a portion of a surface of the semiconductor substrate that is located between the shallow p-type photodiode diffusion layer and the transfer transistor.

15. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 1,
wherein each of the plurality of pixel cells further comprises:

Appl. No. 10/731461
Reply to Action dated April 5, 2007
Page 5

a floating diffusion layer that is formed for converting the signal charge read out from the photodiode by the transfer transistor into a voltage;
a reset transistor that is formed for resetting the signal charge stored in the floating diffusion layer; and
a source follower that is provided for amplifying a change in the voltage that is converted by the floating diffusion layer or converting an impedance.

16. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of pixel cells are formed in a matrix form on the semiconductor substrate.

17. (Original) The solid-state imaging device according to claim 16, wherein the driving unit comprises:

a vertical driving circuit for driving the plurality of pixel cells along a row direction; and
a horizontal driving circuit for driving the plurality of pixel cells along a column direction.

18. (Currently amended) A method for manufacturing the solid-state imaging device according to claim 1, comprising the steps of:

forming the potential smoothing unit for allowing a potential from the photodiode to the transfer transistor to change smoothly;
forming the photodiode for converting the incident light into the signal charge and storing the signal charge, which is conducted after the step of forming the potential smoothing unit; and
forming the transfer transistor for reading out the signal charge stored in the photodiode, which is conducted after the step of forming the photodiode,
wherein, in the step of forming the potential smoothing unit, an impurity is implanted at a region between a region where the photodiode is to be formed and a region where the transfer transistor is to be formed, the injection being carried out using three different levels of energy[.], so that at least three diffusion layers are formed in the

Appl. No. 10/731461
Reply to Action dated April 5, 2007
Page 6

semiconductor substrate, each of the diffusion layers having a different depth from a surface of the semiconductor substrate.

19. (Original) The method for manufacturing a solid-state imaging device according to claim 18, wherein the impurity implanted in the step of forming the potential smoothing unit comprises an ion having a same conductivity type as that of the semiconductor substrate.

20. (Original) The method for manufacturing a solid-state imaging device according to claim 19,

wherein the step of forming the potential smoothing unit comprises the steps of:
forming a first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer for dissipating a first pocket in which the potential from the photodiode to the transfer transistor plunges;
forming a barrier dissipation-diffusion layer on the first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer, the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer being formed for dissipating a barrier of the potential occurring between the first pocket and a second pocket; and
forming a second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer on the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer, the second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer being formed for dissipating the second pocket in which the potential plunges on a side of the transfer transistor with reference to the first pocket.

21. (Currently amended) The method for manufacturing a solid-state imaging device according to claim 20,

wherein, in the first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer formation step, the impurity is implanted using a first energy so as to form the first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer,

in the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer formation step, the impurity is implanted using a second energy smaller that is less than the first energy, so as to form the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer, and

in the second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer formation step, the impurity is implanted using a third energy smaller that is less than the second energy, so as to form the second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer.

Appl. No. 10/731461
Reply to Action dated April 5, 2007
Page 7

22. (Original) The method for manufacturing a solid-state imaging device according to claim 20,

wherein, in the first pocket dissipation-diffusion layer formation step, the impurity is implanted under conditions of an acceleration voltage of 300 keV and a dose of $4.0 \times 10^{12}/\text{cm}^2$, in the barrier dissipation-diffusion layer formation step, the impurity is implanted under conditions of an acceleration voltage of 100 keV and a dose of $8.0 \times 10^{11}/\text{cm}^2$, and in the second pocket dissipation-diffusion layer formation step, the impurity is implanted under conditions of an acceleration voltage of 10 keV and a dose of $4.0 \times 10^{11}/\text{cm}^2$.

23. (Original) The method for manufacturing a solid-state imaging device according to claim 18, wherein the impurity is a boron ion.

24. (Currently amended) An interline transfer CCD image sensor, comprising:
a plurality of pixel cells arranged in a matrix form on a semiconductor substrate; and
a driving unit that is provided for driving the plurality of pixel cells,
wherein each of the plurality of pixel cells comprises:
a photodiode that converts incident light into a signal charge and stores the signal charge;
a transfer gate that is provided for reading out the signal charge stored in the photodiode; and
a potential smoothing unit that is formed so as to allow a potential from the photodiode to the transfer gate to change smoothly[.],
wherein the potential smoothing unit comprises at least three diffusion layers formed in the semiconductor substrate, each of the diffusion layers having a different depth from a surface of the semiconductor substrate.

25. (Original) The interline transfer CCD image sensor according to claim 24, further comprising vertical transfer CCDs that are arranged at predetermined intervals and along a vertical direction so as to be adjacent to the respective pixel cells that are arranged along the vertical direction, the vertical transfer CCDs being provided for transferring the signal charge read out from the photodiode by the transfer gate along the vertical direction.